The Gunston Trust

Tuck-Me-In Tale

THE TALE OF KIDDIE KATYDID

By Arthur Scott Bailey

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ILLUSTRATED BY

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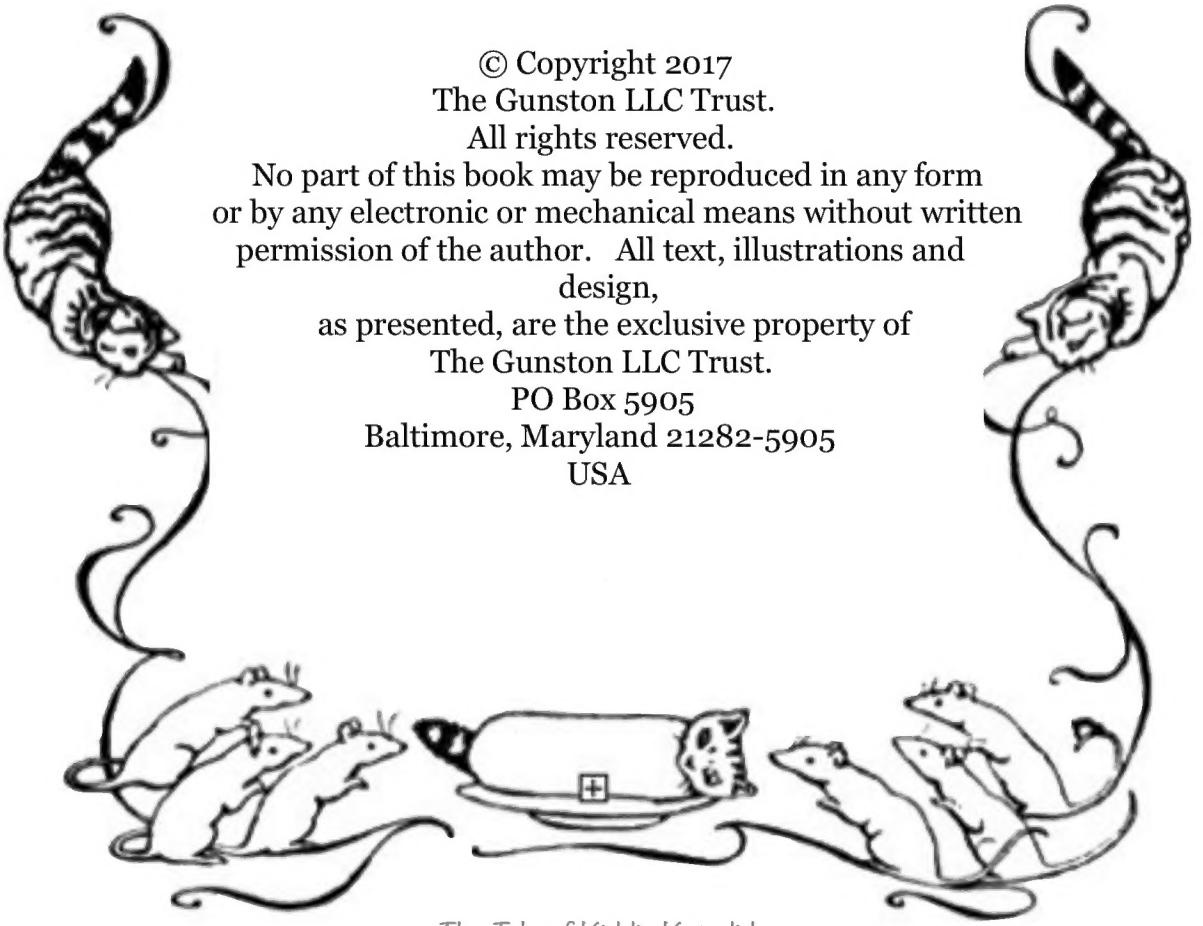

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THE TALE OF KIDDIE KATYDID

I
A GREAT SECRET

Whoever Katy was, and whatever she might have done, nobody in Pleasant Valley knew anything about her except Kiddie Katydid and his numerous and noisy family.

To be sure, many of the wild folk—and the people in the farmhouse, too—remembered hearing her name mentioned the year before.

But they had quite forgotten about her, until August came and Kiddie Katydid and his relations brought her to their minds once more.

Each night the Katydids' rasping chant was repeated again and again: Katy did, Katy did; she did, she did! But since in any crowd there are always a few that want to be different from the rest, now and then some member of Kiddie's clan insisted that Katy didn't—somewhat in this fashion: Katy did, Katy did; she did, she didn't!

However, there were always so many others to drown any such puzzling statement with their shrill clamor that Katy really did do it (whatever it was!) that nobody paid much attention to those few who didn't quite agree.

On warm, dry, midsummer nights the Katydids all made a terrific racket. But there wasn't one of them that outdid Kiddie. He always had the best time when he was making the most noise. And since he liked to station himself in a tree near Farmer Green's house, his uproar often rose plainly above that of the other Katydids.

Lying in bed in his little room under the eaves, Johnnie Green sometimes wished that Kiddie would keep quiet long enough to let him go to sleep in peace.

To be sure, the balmy breezes wafted many other night sounds through Johnnie's open window. From near-by came Chirpy Cricket's cheerful piping. And in the distant swamp

the musical Frog family held a singing party every evening. Johnnie Green liked to hear them. But he objected strongly to the weird hooting and horrid laughter of Solomon Owl, who left the hemlock woods after dark to hunt for field mice.

As for Kiddie Katydid, he paid little attention to any other of the night cries. No matter what anybody else said, he solemnly hurled back at him that neverending refrain, Katy did, Katy did; she did, she did!

You would have thought, if you had heard Kiddie, that somebody had disputed his statement. But such was not the case at all. Since no one except the Katydids knew anything about the mysterious Katy, nobody was able to say truthfully that she didn't do it. In fact, the whole affair was a great secret, so far as outsiders were concerned. And one night Johnnie Green even thrust his head out of the window and cried impatiently:

"All right! All right! I admit that Katy did it. And now do please keep still!"

Of course, his plea failed to silence Kiddie Katydid. But it relieved Johnnie Green's mind and made him feel better, anyhow.

Kiddie told his own people about Johnnie's outburst. And they all agreed that it was a rude thing to do.

"Doesn't he know," they asked, "that the night belongs to us?"

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II
THE WARNING

It must not be supposed that all of Kiddie Katydid's family made the same never ending din at night. Actually it was only the gentlemen that so amused themselves. No doubt the ladies, too, knew the secret about the mysterious Katy—and what she did.

But for some reason they never, never mentioned the matter. Even when they gossiped among themselves, as they sometimes did, they never touched upon that subject.

Furthermore, in the daytime Kiddie and his fellows were as quiet as they could be. Having waked the echoes all night long, they were content, when morning came, to rest silently among the trees and shrubs. And a very good reason did they have, too, for such a habit. During the day there were

altogether too many birds flying about, to please the Katydids. And Kiddie often remarked in a joking way that the only birds he cared about were those that didn't care about him!

Of course, there were a few birds that prowled about Pleasant Valley after dark. Mr. Nighthawk was one of that crew of nightly wanderers. And whenever the word was passed around that he had been seen in the neighborhood, Kiddie Katydid tried to lower his solemn chant, because he knew that Mr. Nighthawk was usually in search of something to eat.

Now, when Kiddie Katydid felt hungry he drove away his gnawing pangs by browsing upon leaves and tender twigs.

But Mr. Nighthawk had no taste for such fodder.

He had an appetite for insects. And between dusk and dawn a good many of Kiddie Katydid's neighbors of one kind or another found their way into Mr. Nighthawk's tummy.

So you see it was no wonder that Kiddie was not eager to attract the attention of that night rover. Some of the more timid of Kiddie's companions even begged him, at times, to hush. They said he was making such a noise that Mr.

Nighthawk would be sure to hear it, even if he were a quarter of a mile away.

But Kiddie Katydid usually laughed at those faint-hearted ones; and often he shrilled his Katy did, Katy did, more loudly than before, just to show them that he was not afraid.

"A person has to take a few chances," he remarked one day. "If we were all afraid to make a sound it would be pretty hard on Katy, for then she would have nobody to take her part. And what would people think of her?"

Evidently Kiddie's reason was a good one, because a number of his cousins spoke up at once and said that they agreed with him perfectly.

But their sisters all exclaimed that sooner or later Mr. Nighthawk would hear them; and then there would certainly be trouble.

Strangely enough, the words were scarcely out of their mouths before they heard a loud call that struck them cold with fear.

Peent! Peent! The cry came out of the air above them without the least warning. And everybody—including Kiddie Katydid—knew that Mr. Nighthawk had come.

III
MR. NIGHTHAWK

Following his cry with two or three quick beats of his wings, Mr. Nighthawk dropped swiftly down among the trees in Farmer Green's dooryard.

He fell so fast that Kiddie Katydid, watching from his hiding-place in one of the maples, couldn't help hoping that the sky-coaster would be unable to stop himself in time to escape being dashed upon the ground.

But Mr. Nighthawk was very skillful at that sport. Just at the right moment he turned quickly, while the air rushed through his wing-feathers with a roaring sound. And then he mounted upward again.

Meanwhile Kiddie Katydid kept very still among the leaves, with his wings folded over his back. Only his two long, thread-like feelers would wave backwards and forwards,

although he tried to keep them still. He was so nearly the color of the green of the tree-top that he trusted Mr. Nighthawk wouldn't be able to spy him.

But he was soon disappointed. For Mr. Nighthawk suddenly cried, "Ha!" and alighted on a neighboring limb.

"There you are!" he said. "You needn't think I don't see you!"

"Why, good evening!" Kiddie Katydid answered, since he was discovered—and there was no use denying it. "It's a great surprise—meeting you so unexpectedly. If you'd only sent word that you were coming I'd have made different arrangements."

"I've no doubt you would have!" Mr. Nighthawk sneered. "But I like to take people unawares. . . . I've heard about you," he added. "They say that you're a great jumper—the spriest jumper in all Pleasant Valley."

"Well, I can jump fairly well," Kiddie Katydid admitted. "But I don't pride myself on my jumping. It's something that has always run in my family, you know. All of us Katydids can leap quite a distance without any trouble."

"So I understand!" Mr. Nighthawk replied. "And I'll tell you some news that ought to please you: I've come here to-night for the special purpose of seeing you jump!"

Kiddie Katydid almost jumped out of his skin when he heard what Mr. Nighthawk said. And it wouldn't have been anything remarkable for him if he had. He had already squirmed out of his skin six times that summer—though not from fear, of course. Casting his skin was almost a habit with Kiddie. All his family were like that.

Though he was not nearly so old as Mr. Nighthawk, Kiddie Katydid had learned a thing or two during his brief lifetime. And though he would have liked very much to jump—and jump out of Mr. Nighthawk's sight, too—he had no wish to hide himself inside that feathered scoundrel. So he clung all the tighter to his perch and replied that he didn't believe he cared to do any jumping that night.

Now, Mr. Nighthawk had a certain odd trick of talking through his nose. Whether that was because the late hours he kept, even on dark nights, gave him a cold in his head, nobody seemed to know. Anyhow, he began teasing Kiddie Katydid to jump for him—and he talked through his nose more than ever. Yes! although Mr. Nighthawk tried his best to speak pleasantly, he only succeeded in making Kiddie Katydid want to laugh at him, for all Kiddie was so uneasy.

IV
A WHINING CALLER

"I certainly hope you aren't going to disappoint me?" Mr. Nighthawk whined, as he looked hungrily at Kiddie Katydid. "Please, please jump for me—just once!" he begged. "Here I've come all the way across the meadow on purpose to see what a fine jumper you are! And I shall feel very unhappy if you don't perform for me."

But Kiddie Katydid refused to budge.

"I hadn't intended to do any leaping to-night," he told Mr. Nighthawk. "And if I jumped for you, it would only upset my plans."

"I know—I know," said Mr. Nighthawk, nodding his head. "But I thought that just to oblige a friend you wouldn't object to jumping from this tree into that one." And he pointed to the nearest maple, the branches of which all but touched the

tree-top in which they were sitting. But Kiddie Katydid's mind was made up.

"No jumping for me to-night!" he piped in a shrill voice.

All this time Mr. Nighthawk was growing hungrier than ever. And one might well wonder why he didn't make one quick spring at Kiddie Katydid and swallow him. But that was not Mr. Nighthawk's way of dining.

"Well," he said at last, "though you refuse to jump for me, won't you kindly call some other member of your family and ask him to oblige me?"

"I don't know where my relations are just now," replied Kiddie Katydid. "Some of them were here a while ago; but they went away." And that was quite true! At that peent—that first warning cry—of Mr. Nighthawk's, they had all vanished as if by magic, among the leaves.

"What about that Katy you're always talking about?" Mr. Nighthawk then inquired. "Don't you suppose you could find her and persuade her to do a little jumping for me—just to show me how it's done?"

"I'm sorry—" Kiddie said somewhat stiffly, "I'm sorry; but I must absolutely refuse to do such a thing. Now that you've

mentioned her, I'll simply say Katy did. And beyond that I cannot discuss her with you."

"She did what?" Mr. Nighthawk wanted to know—through his nose.

But Kiddie Katydid declined to answer that question. He merely hugged his wings closer to his green body, and shot a sly glance at Mr. Nighthawk, as if to say, "Ah! That's for you to find out! But I shan't tell you!"

Mr. Nighthawk looked rather foolish. He had always supposed that any one who spent a good part of every night saying the same thing over and over and over again must be quite dull-witted. But now he began to think that perhaps Kiddie Katydid was brighter than the field people generally believed him to be. And when Kiddie suddenly asked him a question, he was sure of his mistake.

"Did you know," said Kiddie, "that Solomon Owl often visits these farm buildings?"

"Why, no! I wasn't aware of that," Mr. Nighthawk replied with a quick, nervous look behind him. "What brings him here?"

"Chickens!" Kiddie Katydid explained. "Solomon Owl is very fond of chickens. But they do say that he's not above eating a nighthawk when he happens to stumble upon one."

V
SOLOMON OWL'S CRY

For a few moments Mr. Nighthawk fidgeted about on his branch of the maple tree. What Kiddie Katydid said to him about Solomon Owl frightened him. And he almost wished he hadn't come to Farmer Green's dooryard that night.

But the more he thought about the matter, the less he was inclined to believe that there was really any danger. And soon he peered at Kiddie Katydid through the darkness and said:

"You almost fooled me. But I know now what you were trying to do. You were trying to scare me away from here!"

"Katy did, Katy did; she did, she did!"

"You needn't say that!" Mr. Nighthawk exclaimed. "Katy has nothing to do with my case. She hasn't even mentioned Solomon Owl's name."

"You don't understand," Kiddie told him. "I'm speaking of an entirely different matter."

And then Mr. Nighthawk had another idea. He chased the frown away from his face and smiled very pleasantly.

"I'm sorry that you don't feel like jumping for me," he observed. "But I'd be just as glad to see you fly! I remember being told that you fly almost as well as you jump."

"Oh, I can't begin to fly as well as you can," Kiddie Katydid told Mr. Nighthawk. "I only wish I knew how to coast down out of the sky the way you do, without being dashed upon the ground. . . .

How do you manage to stop so suddenly?"

"Pooh! That's nothing!" Mr. Nighthawk said. "It's easy, once you know how."

In spite of his way of belittling his flying feats, Mr. Nighthawk was secretly very proud of his skill at sky-coasting. And when Kiddie Katydid asked him if he wouldn't kindly give an exhibition of the art of fancy flying, Mr. Nighthawk couldn't help feeling pleased.

He wanted to display his skill. But there was just one thing that troubled him. He was afraid that if he climbed up into

the sky, before he dropped down again Kiddie Katydid would have vanished. And that didn't suit Mr. Nighthawk's plans.

"Will you promise to stay right where you are until I come back?" he asked.

Now, Kiddie Katydid had intended to hide himself as soon as Mr. Nighthawk should leave him. But there was nothing he could do now except to agree to Mr. Nighthawk's proposal.

"I'll promise," said Kiddie, "if you'll promise me that you'll surely return. Otherwise I might have to stay here for a month, perhaps, waiting for you."

"Oh! I'll come back in a minute or two," Mr. Nighthawk laughed, as he looked hungrily at Kiddie. "Don't you worry about my not coming back to talk with you!"

Then he began climbing upwards into the sky. And he had gone about as high as he wished to, when all at once a rolling Whoo-whoo-whoo, whoo-whoo, to-whoo-ah startled him. It was Solomon Owl's weird call. And it drove every thought except one out of Mr. Nighthawk's head. That one idea—to escape—filled his mind completely. And he turned and hurried away from Farmer Green's place as fast as he could go; for Mr. Nighthawk feared that Solomon Owl would arrive there at any moment.

As for Kiddie Katydid, when he heard Solomon's cry he knew at once that he was rid of Mr. Nighthawk. And Kiddie's Katy did, Katy did; she did, she did rang out again and again in the night. All his friends and cousins crept out of their hiding-places and joined in the chorus. And everybody enjoyed a good laugh over Mr. Nighthawk's visit —and his sudden departure.

Perhaps Kiddie may be forgiven for boasting the least bit, as his companions crowded around him.

"I knew better than to jump for Mr. Nighthawk!" he cried. "I happened to know that he always wants to catch his food on the wing. And if I had jumped, or tried to fly away, he would have snatched me right out of the air as quick as lightning."

VI
FREDDIE FIREFLY'S DISCOVERY

That secret about Katy, and what she did, was not the only one that Kiddie hid from the field people. He had another—something about himself—that nobody ever suspected, until Freddie Firefly stumbled upon it one night.

Probably Freddie would never have learned this second secret had he not been trying to find out about the first one. Over in the meadow he had heard Kiddie Katydid shrilling his well-worn ditty, Katy did; she did, she did! And he had danced his way into Farmer Green's dooryard because he wanted to have a talk with Kiddie and ask him some questions about that unknown lady.

Like all others who tried to pry into the mystery, Freddie Firefly had no luck at all. For Kiddie Katydid made no reply to his inquiries. Kiddie merely smiled in a most annoying fashion and kept on repeating the refrain.

"Doesn't your voice ever get tired, singing those silly words over and over again all night long?" Freddie Firefly finally asked.

"Oh! no, indeed!" said Kiddie Katydid. "On the contrary it rests my voice to do this." And he solemnly shrilled the chorus more rapidly than ever.

"There's something queer about that cry of yours!" Freddie Firefly suddenly exclaimed. "I'm watching you closely; but I can't see that your mouth moves the least bit."

Kiddie's Secret is Discovered by Freddie Firefly

Again Kiddie Katydid smiled. He saw that Freddie Firefly was puzzled.

"Why do you keep moving your wings when you say Katy did?" Freddie Firefly asked him at last.

But Kiddie refused to answer that question—a fact which at once made Freddie suspicious. He moved nearer Kiddie Katydid and flashed his light upon him every time Kiddie repeated his odd statement about Katy. And soon Freddie Firefly grew much excited. He actually danced up and down, he was so astonished.

"I've found you out!" he cried in a loud voice. "It's no wonder your voice doesn't get tired from that song! For you don't really sing it at all! You make that queer sound by rubbing your wing covers together!"

Kiddie Katydid abruptly ceased his shrilling. He looked most uncomfortable.

And it was not surprising. He had not supposed that Freddie Firefly—or anybody else—would be shrewd enough to discover that secret. It was a family secret—one that

had been closely guarded by the Katydids since the beginning of time, almost. And here he had gone and let Freddie Firefly find it out!

"I'm right about that and you can't deny it!" cried Freddie Firefly boldly. "You may as well admit that what I say is true," he added.

"I certainly won't dispute you," Kiddie Katydid replied. "I have too good manners to do anything so rude as that."

"I don't care about your manners," Freddie answered. "I dare say they're good enough, although some people think it's rather rude of you to make so much noise when a good many others are trying to sleep."

"I should like to know who objects to my music?" Kiddie Katydid exclaimed hotly. "If Farmer Green has been talking to you, I should like to state that he had better be careful. Anyone who drives a clattering mowing-machine around, when a lot of us are trying to get our rest in the daytime, ought not to complain about a little music on a pleasant night like this."

VII
FREDDIE WANTS TO TELL

As soon as Kiddie Katydid mentioned the word music, Freddie Firefly began to dance and shout.

"There!" he cried. "You've just the same as told me that I was right. If you sang your Katy did, Katy did; she did, she did, you would call it singing. But since you make that ditty by rubbing your wing covers together, it is music. And you just referred to it as such!"

Well, Kiddie Katydid couldn't say a single word. Freddie Firefly was right. They both knew it. And the secret was hopelessly "out." In fact, it was a secret

no longer—unless Kiddie Katydid could persuade Freddie Firefly to keep the news to himself.

"You won't say anything about this little matter, I hope," Kiddie began.

"Won't I?" said Freddie Firefly. "Why, I just couldn't help telling people what I've learned! It's the biggest bit of news that I've known since I've lived in Pleasant Valley. And I must get word of it to old Mr. Crow somehow."

"Why Mr. Crow?" Kiddie Katydid inquired anxiously. He knew that the old gentleman was a great gossip. "You might as well put this in a newspaper as tell Mr. Crow about it."

"Ah! That's just the point!" cried Freddie. "Mr. Crow is a newspaper. Perhaps you didn't know it; but every Saturday he flies over Blue Mountain to the pond where Brownie Beaver lives and tells Brownie all the news of the past week."

"Then for pity's sake, don't let him hear of this!" Kiddie begged.

But nothing could have stopped Freddie Firefly.

"You're too modest," he said. "It's a shame to be able to make music the way you do and not let the neighbors know it. Why, the first thing you know you'll be one of the most famous people in this whole valley."

"But I don't want to be!" Kiddie Katydid cried. "I'm not like you. You go dancing about every night, flashing your light so everyone can see you. But I stay among the trees and shrubs. And I even wear a green suit—which matches the color of the leaves—so people won't notice me. Of course," Kiddie added, "I don't mind if the public hears my music. But I don't care to be seen, as a rule. And I don't like callers a bit!"

"You don't, eh?" remarked Freddie Firefly. "Then it's time for me to be moving along. For I never stay where I'm not welcome." And he flitted away, feeling somewhat peevish—and all the more determined to get the news of the discovered secret to Mr. Crow at the earliest possible moment.

How he was going to do that he didn't quite know.

There was little chance of his seeing Mr. Crow, for the old gentleman only waked up at the time Freddie Firefly was ready to go to bed—about dawn.

He was pondering over his difficulty, which bothered him not a little, when a terrific croaking from the direction of the swamp reached his ears. It was the final chorus of the Frog

family's nightly singing party. And it promptly put an idea into Freddie Firefly's head.

"I'll hurry right over there and speak to Mr. Frog, the well-known tailor," he said to himself. "He knows old Mr. Crow. He sees him almost every day. And he'll be glad to give the old gentleman a message."

VIII
SPREADING THE NEWS

When Freddie Firefly reached the swamp he found that the singing party had already broken up. But luckily, Mr. Frog the tailor was the last one to leave. He was still poised on the bank of the sluggish stream, ready to plunge into the water and swim away, when Freddie Firefly dropped down upon a cat-tail and called him by name, flashing his light frantically so that Mr. Frog would be sure to notice him.

"Wait a moment!" cried Freddie. "I've something to say to you!"

"Out with it, then!" said Mr. Frog. "My time is valuable, you know. I ought to be back in my shop this moment; for I promised Paddy Muskrat I'd make him a policeman's uniform by to-morrow morning. And I haven't begun it yet."

"Why not?" asked Freddie, forgetting—for the moment—his own errand.

"He wants brass buttons," explained the tailor. "And I couldn't get any until to-night."

"But couldn't you go ahead without them?" Freddie Firefly inquired.

"Certainly not!" replied Mr. Frog. "I see you don't know much about making a policeman's suit. You start by laying the buttons in a row on the ground; and then you sew the cloth onto them. . . . That's my own invention—that method," he added with an air of pride. "And now, what was it you wanted to say to me?"

"I don't believe there's any use of my telling you, after all," Freddie Firefly replied. "You're going to be so busy that you won't have time to do an errand for me. I wanted you to give Mr. Crow a message."

"Yes—I'll be altogether too rushed to bother with it," said Mr. Frog. "I expect to be on the jump all night—and most of to-morrow, too."

"This message," Freddie Firefly went on, "was something about Kiddie Katydid. I found out his secret to-night. And I thought Mr. Crow ought to know about it."

Now, Mr. Frog was all ready to leap into the water. But when Freddie said that, the tailor promptly changed his mind.

"Kiddie Katydid's secret!" he repeated in a tone of amazement. "You don't mean to say you've discovered what it was that Katy did?"

"Never mind!" said Freddie. "I don't want to trouble you, Mr. Frog. I know you're too busy to bother your head with such things."

"Tut, tut, young man!" Mr. Frog cried. "I see you have something important to tell me. And since that is the case, I'll manage somehow to deliver your message to Mr. Crow, even if I have to disappoint a customer. Always oblige a friend! That's my motto!" said Mr. Frog.

"Very well, then!" Freddie Firefly replied. "I'll say what I was going to; but it doesn't concern that Katy person you just mentioned."

"Oh, it doesn't," the tailor echoed. "Then I don't know that I care to listen to you, after all. I thought you were going to explain about that mysterious lady that Kiddie's always singing about." He was sadly disappointed. And once more he turned toward the creek.

IX
MR. FROG IS PLEASED

"Kiddie Katydid doesn't sing!" Freddie Firefly told Mr. Frog hurriedly.

And Mr. Frog was so surprised that he almost sat right down in the mud.

"What do you mean?" he cried. "You must be crazy! For there isn't a single person in all Pleasant Valley that hasn't heard Kiddie Katydid singing his tiresome song on a fine midsummer night."

"That—" replied Freddie Firefly—"that is just where you're mistaken, Mr. Frog. And that's where everybody else is mistaken, too. To-night I was lucky enough to learn that Kiddie Katydid has been fooling us all this time."

"You don't say so!" said Mr. Frog. "Then who is it that sings that everlasting chorus?"

"Nobody!"

"Nonsense!" Mr. Frog scoffed. "I can be fooled once, maybe. But I'm not to be fooled twice. And you needn't think for a moment that you can make me believe any such thing."

"I don't care whether you believe it or not," Freddie Firefly declared. "All I ask you to do is to tell the story to Mr. Crow."

"He won't believe it, either," the tailor retorted.

"Perhaps he will when he hears the rest of the message," Freddie answered. "I was just going to explain that Kiddie Katydid has a trick of rubbing his wing covers together to make that Katy did sound."

"For the land's sake!" cried Mr. Frog, as he leaped into the water, convinced at last of the truth of Freddie Firefly's claim. "I must hurry home at once, for dawn's already breaking. And Mr. Crow may come sailing over my place at any moment." He landed with a splash in the creek and started to swim rapidly away. But after a few strokes he paused and turned around. "You might almost say that Kiddie Katydid is a fiddler, mightn't you?" he called.

"Something like that!" Freddie Firefly agreed a bit doubtfully.

"I'll tell Mr. Crow that, anyhow," said the tailor. "It will make the story more interesting, at least. And so far as I can see, it can't do any harm."

And then he hastened away, leaving Freddie Firefly to get home as best he could in the gray of the early morning.

"You may as well put out your light!" Mr. Frog shouted back, as he disappeared among the reeds. But he didn't wait to see whether Freddie took his advice. He was too much excited over the strange news. And as he swam easily along with practiced strokes he kept talking to himself.

"I'm a pretty clever chap, I am!" he chuckled. "I've discovered a great secret this night. And old Mr. Crow will be glad to hear all about it. Perhaps he'll want me to help him with his newspaper after this.

"And for all I know I'll have so much to do that I won't be able to make any more clothes for my customers."

He hadn't swum far before he had entirely forgotten that it was really Freddie Firefly who had discovered the secret and told it to him.

No doubt if anybody had reminded Mr. Frog of that fact he would have been very indignant.

X
A PAIR OF RASCALS

Mr. Frog reached home just as the sun peeped over the hills. He slipped hastily out of the water, sprang up the bank of the creek, and in three jumps landed on the roof of his tailor's shop. There he squatted, while his queer, bulging eyes scanned the sky in every direction. He was watching for Mr. Crow, and all but bursting with the news that he had for the old gentleman.

Mr. Frog had not sat there long before he heard a hoarse Caw, caw! in the distance.

"There he is!" cried the tailor aloud. "There's the old boy! He'll be in sight in a moment."

And sure enough! soon Mr. Crow flapped out of the woods and came sailing over the meadows.

Thereupon Mr. Frog set up a great croaking. And to his delight his elderly friend heard him calling and dropped down at once.

"I've some news for you," Mr. Frog announced, as soon as the old black scamp alighted near him.

"It'll have to keep," Mr. Crow replied. "I'm on my way to the cornfield. I haven't had my breakfast yet. And a person of my age has to eat his meals regularly."

The sprightly tailor looked slightly disappointed.

"I don't know whether the news will keep or not," he replied slyly. "It's very important. And I may have to tell it to someone else first if you don't care to hear it now."

"What's your news about?" Mr. Crow asked him gruffly. "I suppose you've made another suit for somebody. And you remember I told you I couldn't put that news in my newspaper any more unless you paid me something. It's advertising. And nobody gets free advertising."

"This news is something entirely different from anything you've ever heard," Mr. Frog insisted. "It's about Kiddie Katydid. He's a——"

"Wait till I come back from the cornfield!" Mr. Crow pleaded.

"I can't! I simply must tell it now!" Mr. Frog cried.

"Very well! But please talk fast; for I'm terribly hungry."

"Kiddie Katydid is a fiddler," Mr. Frog announced. "He fiddles every night. And that's the way he makes that ditty of his—Katy did, Katy——"

"Don't!" Mr. Crow begged. "Please don't! It's bad enough to have to hear that silly chorus every time I happen to wake up during the night—bad enough, I say, without being obliged to listen to it in broad daylight."

"Very well!" the tailor yielded. "But he fiddles it, all the same. And when you tell my tale to Brownie Beaver I guess he'll be surprised."

"I shan't tell him," Mr. Crow declared, thereby astonishing Mr. Frog.

"Why not?" the tailor demanded.

"We've had a slight disagreement," said Mr. Crow with a hoarse laugh. "I'm not his newspaper any longer."

"Well, there's nothing to prevent your telling this story to other people, is there? And you certainly will be willing to mention me at the same time, won't you?" Mr. Frog inquired with an anxious pucker between his strange eyes.

"Where do you come in, pray tell?" Mr. Crow inquired coldly.

"Why, I discovered the secret!"

"Perhaps you did—and perhaps you didn't," Mr. Crow observed. Being very, very old, he was very, very wise. And he had long since learned that Mr. Frog was a somewhat slippery person. "If I spread any such news as this about Pleasant Valley I shall do it in my own way," he remarked. And thereupon the old gentleman rose quickly and disappeared in the direction of the cornfield, without so much as a "Thank you!"

Mr. Frog gazed after him mournfully.

"If that isn't just my luck!" he lamented. "I ought to have kept the secret till after the old boy had his breakfast. Then perhaps he'd have been better natured."

XI
A CHANGE IN THE WEATHER

Well, the day was not half gone before all the wild creatures in Pleasant Valley had heard all about Kiddie Katydid and his fiddling. At least twenty-seven people came to Mr. Frog at different times and told him the news. And he was furious.

"Old Mr. Crow has deceived me!" he complained. "I found out this secret myself. And now that black rascal's taking all the credit for it."

"Mr. Crow has suggested that Kiddie Katydid be invited to join the Pleasant Valley orchestra," Long Bill Wren informed Mr. Frog. "They have no fiddlers, you know. And Kiddie will be a great help to them. Mr. Crow has appointed a committee to call on Kiddie to-night and ask him to come to the next concert."

That was the last straw, so far as Mr. Frog was concerned.

"Mr. Crow might at least have put me on the committee," he spluttered. "But he has left me out in the cold."

"Why, it's not cold to-day!" Long Bill exclaimed. "Quite warm —I call it!"

"It'll be good and cold by night," said Mr. Frog. "I look for a sudden change in the weather. Nobody ought to venture out to-night without his heaviest overcoat on."

After flinging that remark over his shoulder, Mr. Frog flung himself inside his tailor's shop and slammed the door behind him. And then, sitting down cross-legged upon his table, he began to think, wrinkling his low brow until you might have supposed he would need to smooth it out again with one of his flat-irons.

At last the tailor suddenly quit thinking and smiled very widely from ear to ear. And carefully selecting some soft, warm, green cloth he began to fashion a small garment, which was tiny enough to fit—well, to fit a person as little as Kiddie Katydid.

Being a spry worker, Mr. Frog finished his task by nightfall. And then, taking his handiwork with him, he left his shop—after locking the door behind him—and hid himself beneath a shelving rock on the bank of the creek.

He was in a very happy mood; for his ideas about the weather had proved to be good. It was already turning cold. "If it wasn't midsummer I should think we were going to have a frost!" Mr. Frog exclaimed, buttoning the long coat which he had donned before going out of doors. "I wish they'd hurry up!" he added mysteriously. He kept a close watch upon his shop door. It was evident that he expected callers.

Not long afterward a crowd began to gather in front of Mr. Frog's door. "Back Soon" said the sign upon it. And the thinly clad, shivering knot of field folk sat themselves down unhappily and waited for the tailor to appear. Every one of them wanted a warm new overcoat, for each expected to be out late that night.

Meanwhile Mr. Frog watched them—and giggled as loud as he dared. It was Mr. Crow's committee that thronged about his door—the people who were expecting to call upon Kiddie Katydid that very night to invite him to join the Pleasant Valley orchestra.

XII
A PRESENT FOR KIDDIE

Mr. Frog had a delightful time listening to the remarks of his callers, who had no idea that he was so near at hand. And as the weather grew colder, they began to shiver and their voices began to shake. And by the time it was almost dark all the waiting company were quite discouraged.

"I'll never be able to stay out to-night!" Chirpy Cricket declared. "I'm so cold now that I can scarcely move."

And it was the same with everybody else. Even Freddie Firefly complained that his light didn't warm him in the least. And he said he would have to go home at once.

"Mr. Crow will be very angry with us to-morrow when he learns we haven't called on Kiddie Katydid," somebody

remarked. And a hush fell upon the company. But Chirpy Cricket had a happy thought, which made them all feel better.

"Kiddie Katydid won't stay out of doors on a night like this!" he suddenly exclaimed. "He'll find some snug place to creep into. And we wouldn't be able to find him in Farmer Green's dooryard even if we tried to."

"That's so!" Chirpy's companions shouted.

"Then there's no need of our freezing here any longer, waiting for that wretched tailor, Mr. Frog!" said Freddie Firefly.

And somehow, Mr. Frog did not smile quite so widely over that speech.

Nevertheless, he was pleased, on the whole. And not waiting to watch the shivering party leave the neighborhood, he set off at once toward Farmer Green's house, making first for the river, which ran near the farm buildings, because Mr. Frog did not like to travel by land.

Because the air was cool, the water felt all the warmer. And by the time Mr. Frog had reached his journey's end he was almost overheated. Besides, as he noticed, it was not so cold in Farmer Green's dooryard as it had been by the creek.

He stopped, for a few moments, to cool himself in the watering-trough. And then he hopped briskly on to the front yard.

To his great delight he had scarcely reached the clump of maple trees when right above him he heard Kiddie Katydid's famous refrain.

"Good evening!" Mr. Frog called. "I've brought a little present for you, all the way from the creek."

"How-dy do!" said Kiddie Katydid. "It's a cool night, isn't it?"

"You won't mind the weather when you put this on," Mr. Frog replied, holding up the small garment he had made that afternoon.

Kiddie Took His New Coat From the Twig

"What's that?" Kiddie Katydid asked.

"An overcoat, fashioned expressly for you by the finest tailor in Pleasant Valley!" said Mr. Frog very proudly.

"You're exceedingly kind, I'm sure," said Kiddie. And he was about to jump down and slip into the coat when he noticed that Mr. Frog had an extremely wide mouth. . . . Suppose, after slipping into the coat, he should find himself slipping down the tailor's throat?

"Just hang the coat on a twig and I'll get into it a little later," Kiddie Katydid suggested.

"I see!" Mr. Frog cried. "That's your way of accepting a gift. And I wouldn't dream of quarreling with you about that. So I'll hang the coat right here and go back to the watering-trough to wet my feet. While I'm gone you can try the coat on, and tell me how you like it when I come back."

"I hope it's a green one!" said Kiddie Katydid somewhat anxiously. "For if it isn't green, I couldn't wear it, you know. I always wear green. It's my favorite color."

"Ah! Trust me not to make a mistake!" Mr. Frog chuckled happily. And then he withdrew. But he could not help pausing for a moment, to look back and watch, while Kiddie sprang

down from his tree and took his new coat from the twig on which the tailor had hung it.

XIII
KIDDIE KATYDID IS SHY

"Now—" said Mr. Frog, when he had returned from the watering-trough—"now tell me, how do you like the overcoat I made for you?"

And Kiddie Katydid, safe in his tree once more, and snugly buttoned in Mr. Frog's gift, replied that it was the finest garment he had ever owned in all his life.

"Good!" said Mr. Frog. "And I dare say you've had many overcoats in your time, too."

Kiddie Katydid did not correct Mr. Frog's mistake. To tell the truth, he had never before had an overcoat on his back.

"I've come here to-night to deliver an important message to you," Mr. Frog went on. "And thinking the weather might be cooler than you liked, I made you that fine coat so you could stay out here in your tree and listen to what I have to tell you. . . . I hear—" he said—"I hear that you're a musician."

"Yes!" said Kiddie Katydid—for he knew well enough that Freddie Firefly could not have kept the secret.

"I hear that you're a fiddler," Mr. Frog added.

"Why, no! I've never played the fiddle!" Kiddie Katydid exclaimed. "I don't know how to do that."

"Well, how do you know that you can't, if you've never tried?" Mr. Frog retorted. "If you can play Katy did, Katy did; she did, she did, by rubbing your wing covers together, there's no knowing what you could do with a real fiddle and bow."

"That's true," Kiddie admitted. "I never thought of that."

"Well," said Mr. Frog, who appeared greatly pleased with himself, "anyhow, I want you to join our singing society. Perhaps you've heard me and my friends over in the swamp. Almost every night we have a singing party there. And if you'll only agree to fiddle for us, while we sing, I venture to say that we'll have Farmer Green getting up out of his bed to listen to us."

Naturally, the invitation pleased Kiddie Katydid. But for all that, he shook his head slowly.

"I'm afraid I'm too shy," he told Mr. Frog. "I like to stay hidden among the leaves, where people can't see me."

"That'll be all right!" Mr. Frog assured him. "You can hide in some bush near-by, where we can't look at you."

But still Kiddie Katydid wouldn't accept the invitation. Although Mr. Frog teased and teased, all he would say was that he would think the matter over.

"Promise me this, at least—" Mr. Frog finally said —"promise me that you won't agree to make music for anybody else! Now that people know you're musical, they'll be asking you to play in an orchestra, or a band, or a fife-and-drum corps, or something. But I've invited you first, and if you oblige anybody it ought to be me—especially after I've given you that beautiful warm overcoat." The tailor looked upwards into the tree so beseechingly that Kiddie Katydid hadn't the heart to refuse his request.

"I'll promise that," he said.

"Hurrah!" cried Mr. Frog, opening his mouth so widely that Kiddie Katydid couldn't help shuddering at the sight.

And then Mr. Frog leaped into the air three times. And each time that he leaped, he struck his heels together three times, just to show how happy he was.

Then, with a hearty "Good night!" he turned away and went skipping off.

And Kiddie Katydid, making his curious music in the top of the maple tree, kept thinking that the tailor was one of the oddest chaps he had ever seen.

He did wish, too, that Mr. Frog had a smaller mouth.

XIV

KIDDIE KEEPS HIS PROMISE

Old Mr. Crow flew into a terrible rage when he found, the next morning, that his committee had not called on Kiddie Katydid during the night. And when Chirpy Cricket told him that the weather was too cold for anybody to stay out late, Mr. Crow said "Nonsense! What about Mr. Frog?"

That was a hard question to answer. And Chirpy Cricket was so afraid of angry Mr. Crow that he promptly hid himself among the roots of a clump of grass.

Now, the fact that Mr. Frog had been away from his shop the night before set Mr. Crow to worrying.

"That slippery tailor has been up to some mischief," Mr. Crow declared. "And if he has played a trick on me I'll never hear the last of it."

The old gentleman was so disturbed that he quite lost his appetite during the rest of the day. And he moped and groaned about, hoping for the best, but fearing the worst.

One thing that made him especially uneasy was the fact that when he called on Mr. Frog he found the tailor in a gayer mood than he had ever known him to be in.

Mr. Frog bounded about his shop like a rubber ball. And the worst of it was, he would sing, although Mr. Crow begged him, with tears in his eyes, to stop.

"What's the matter?" Mr. Frog asked him. "Don't you like my voice? Or is it the songs I sing? I've a new one that I'd like to sing for you. It's about one of the Katydid family; and I'm sure you'll enjoy hearing it."

But Mr. Crow wouldn't stay there any longer. With a loud squawk of rage he scurried away. He was sure, then, that Mr. Frog had tricked him.

That night Mr. Crow's committee called on Kiddie Katydid. It was a fine, warm, moonlight night. And as they drew near Farmer Green's place they could hear Kiddie's shrill music, even while they were still a quarter of a mile away.

"He plays better than ever," said Freddie Firefly. "I wish Mr. Crow could hear him." And they hurried on, believing that everything was going to turn out all right, in the end.

"Mr. Crow will be sorry, to-morrow, that he scolded us," said Chirpy Cricket.

But the committee met with a sad disappointment. When they invited Kiddie Katydid to join the Pleasant Valley orchestra he told them that he couldn't.

"Why not?" Freddie Firefly asked.

"I've promised somebody that I wouldn't," Kiddie said.

And though they pressed him for an explanation, he wouldn't give them any. He wouldn't say another word.

It was a downcast company that left Farmer Green's front yard. And they quarreled among themselves, too, before they parted. For there wasn't one of them that was willing to tell Mr. Crow that Kiddie had declined his invitation.

But they finally hit upon a plan that suited everybody. They agreed to get Mr. Crow's cousin, Jasper Jay, to break the news gently to the old gentleman.

It turned out that Jasper was delighted to undertake the task. He hoped that Mr. Crow would fly into a passion when he heard the sad tale. And Jasper was not disappointed. For old Mr. Crow was furious.

"It's the work of that sly rascal, Mr. Frog!" he squalled. "He must have called on Kiddie Katydid and hoodwinked him somehow. . . . I'd like to know what he said."

But Mr. Crow never found that out. So Kiddie Katydid had another secret, which was known only to himself and Mr. Frog.

And Mr. Frog wouldn't tell anybody, because he preferred to tease Mr. Crow.

And Kiddie Katydid wouldn't tell anybody, because he liked secrets. So when people tried to pry into the affair, he just folded his wings tightly over himself—and said nothing.

XV
BENJAMIN BAT'S PLAN

Of course, Kiddie Katydid was not always to be found in his favorite nook among the trees in Farmer Green's front yard. Quite often he went skipping about from tree to tree or from bush to bush, sometimes flying and sometimes leaping. It really made little difference to him which mode of travel he used. And he never stopped to think how lucky he was to be able to move so spryly with the help of either his legs or his wings. He took his good fortune as a matter of course.

There was Mr. Frog! He was a famous jumper; but he couldn't fly. And there was Mr. Nighthawk! He was a skillful flier; but he couldn't jump.

Such thoughts, however, never entered Kiddie Katydid's head. He went cheerfully about his business—which was eating, principally—and jumped or flew as the mood seized him. Indeed, if it hadn't been for that queer fellow, Benjamin

Kiddie Sees Benjamin Bat in Front of the Moon

Bat, probably Kiddie never would have realized just what he could—or couldn't—do.

Since Benjamin was another night-prowler like himself, Kiddie Katydid saw him often. It seemed to Kiddie that he could scarcely ever gaze at the full moon without catching sight of Benjamin Bat's dusky shape flitting jerkily across the great, round, yellow disk.

When Benjamin was astir in the neighborhood, Kiddie Katydid lay low—or high—in his favorite tree-top. At least, he kept very still until the night was nearly gone, to give Benjamin Bat plenty of time to satisfy his hunger. For Kiddie found Benjamin Bat a much more agreeable companion when he had eaten his fill. Early in the evening, soon after he had waked up, Benjamin was positively ferocious. But the more he ate, the pleasanter he grew. And by the time faint streaks of light began to show in the east he could smile and crack a joke as easily as anybody else.

Well, late one night—or early one morning—Kiddie Katydid and Benjamin Bat were enjoying a chat in the tree-tops, when Benjamin put a new idea into Kiddie's head.

"We ought to have some sports right here in Farmer Green's yard," he suggested. "You're such a fine jumper that you

could try your skill against Mr. Frog. And you're such a fine flier that you and Freddie Firefly ought to have a race. . . . I'd suggest—" he added—"I'd suggest that the sports take place after dark, almost any evening."

But Kiddie Katydid spoke up quickly and said that he wouldn't care to join in the fun until the night was almost gone. He said he was sure he could jump and fly better at that time. And that was quite true, because he knew that if Mr. Bat swallowed him early in the evening he wouldn't be able to take any part in the sports.

"Very well, then!" Benjamin Bat replied. "But it will be the worst possible time for me."

"What do you mean?" Kiddie Katydid inquired. "Do you expect to enter any of the contests?"

"Oh, yes!" said Benjamin. "I'm going to hang by my heels from the limb of a tree. And since I'm never so heavy early in the evening, before I've had a chance to eat much, I'd prefer to have the sports begin soon after dark."

But Kiddie Katydid said that there was no doubt Benjamin Bat would win in the sport of hanging head downward by his heels. And he told Benjamin not to worry.

XVI
A NOISY CROWD

When the night of the races and other sports finally came, a great crowd began to gather about Farmer Green's place soon after dark. Although Benjamin Bat had told people that the fun wasn't going to begin until almost morning, they were all so excited that they couldn't wait for the night to pass.

They lingered around the dooryard and talked so loudly that they actually disturbed the household. Farmer Green was even tempted to get up and shut his window, he found it so hard to go to sleep.

The noisiest of all the gathering was Mr. Frog, the tailor, who lived over by the creek.

He had a great deal to say about everything; and it soon became plain to everyone that he was trying to manage the whole affair.

Mr. Frog objected to every arrangement that Benjamin Bat had made. When he learned that he was expected to enter a jumping contest with Kiddie Katydid he exclaimed that he and Kiddie were such good friends that he hated the thought of trying to beat Kiddie at jumping.

"Kiddie might feel bad," said Mr. Frog. "People might laugh at him because I won."

"Don't you worry about me!" Kiddie Katydid called out.

"Where are you?" asked Mr. Frog, looking all around. "I can hear you, but I can't see you."

But Kiddie Katydid refused to show himself.

He preferred, for the time being, to remain safely hidden among the leaves, where he could listen to what people said —and talk to them when he wanted to.

"Wouldn't you prefer some other sort of contest?" Mr. Frog then asked him. "Now, there's swimming! We could swim in the watering-trough, or the duck pond. And if I beat you, you could stick your head under water, so you wouldn't hear what people said. Don't you think that's a good idea?"

"Goodness, no!" cried Kiddie. "I'd drown myself in no time."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Frog. "I never thought of that."

And then everybody laughed so loudly at him that he hurried off to the watering-trough to dive under water, and stay there until he was sure that his remarks had been forgotten.

Meanwhile Benjamin Bat was worrying. He couldn't find anybody who was willing to try the sport of hanging head downward by his heels. He asked Kiddie Katydid; and Kiddie declined flatly to do any such thing.

Now, since Benjamin had not yet dined, he was very short-tempered. And he grew angry at once.

"What's the matter?" he sneered. "Don't you know how to do an easy trick like that? If I could see you—" he declared, peering among the maple leaves—"if I could see you I'd show you how it feels to hang beneath a limb."

Kiddie Katydid said no word in reply. He knew well enough what Benjamin Bat meant. Benjamin wanted to eat him! And he wished that Benjamin would go away and get a good meal somewhere before he came back again.

XVII
KITTY DID!

As the hours sped by and the moon at last crossed the sky and dropped out of sight, Kiddie Katydid saw that there was going to be trouble.

He was worried about Benjamin Bat. Early in the evening Benjamin had begun to abuse Mr. Frog. And he was so busy doing that that he wouldn't take the time to go away and snatch even a bite to eat.

Naturally, Benjamin's temper grew worse as the night lengthened. And Kiddie Katydid had to admit to himself that he would be most unwise if he did any jumping or flying just then. For Benjamin Bat was in so fierce a humor that he was ready to snap at anybody who was smaller than he was. All the tiny flying folk gave him a wide berth. And it began to look as if he were going to spoil the night's fun.

But all the while Mr. Frog never once lost his temper. Even when Benjamin Bat called him a long-legged, flat-headed, paddle-footed meddler, Mr. Frog only smiled and turned a few somersaults backward.

"What's the matter with you?" Benjamin Bat asked him at last. "Can't you speak?"

"Certainly! Certainly!" Mr. Frog said then. "I've been trying to think of some way to prevent so much quarreling. It hardly seems fair to Kiddie Katydid—this uproar right in his dooryard. And since you are the one that's making the greatest disturbance, I'd suggest that you go away and leave us to enjoy the rest of the night in peace."

"I'll do nothing of the kind!" Benjamin Bat screamed. "This is my party. I thought of it in the first place. And I'm going to stay here until dawn."

"Very well! Then the rest of us will leave at once," Mr. Frog told him. And calling good-by to all his friends, Mr. Frog flopped himself briskly away.

The smaller folk, too, vanished as if by magic. Though Benjamin Bat watched sharply, he didn't even see Freddie Firefly when he slipped away.

"That's strange!" thought Benjamin. "He must have put out his light, to fool me. But I don't care, because Kiddie Katydid is hidden somewhere in this tree. And I'm going to find him —for I'm terribly hungry."

So Benjamin began flying in and out among the maple branches. Nobody but he could have twisted and turned in such a helter-skelter fashion. It made Kiddie Katydid almost dizzy just to watch him. But Kiddie didn't take his eyes off Benjamin, because he intended to jump—and jump fast and far—in case Benjamin should spy him.

Now, although the Bat family was able to see in the dark as well as Farmer Green's cat could, Benjamin failed to find Kiddie Katydid anywhere. Crouching motionless upon a leaf, and dressed all in green, Kiddie Katydid was almost invisible. But if he had moved the least bit, Benjamin Bat would have found him out.

Looking only for a tiny green figure among the green leaves, Benjamin Bat paid no attention to the grayish branches of the tree. He was really strangely careless. Quite unsuspected by him, while he was wrangling with Mr. Frog, the cat had crept out of the woodshed and stolen softly into

that very tree, where she lay motionless along a limb. She had come out upon an early morning hunt for birds.

She was a fierce old cat. There was nothing, almost, that she wasn't ready and willing to fight. Even old dog Spot had learned to shun her. And now she waited patiently until Benjamin Bat should come within reach of her quick paws.

That stupid, blundering fellow bumped squarely into her at last. And how he escaped is still a mystery. The old cat always claimed that when she found Benjamin wasn't a bird she was so surprised that she let him go. And as for Benjamin himself, he never would discuss his adventure with anybody. Kiddie Katydid was the only other one who saw what happened. But he was so frightened at the time that he only knew that Benjamin Bat tore away toward the swamp as if a thousand cats were following him. And people do say that for some time afterward, Kiddie Katydid shrilled a slightly different ditty. It was Kitty did, Kitty did; she did, she did!

But when Mr. Frog mentioned that news, with a laugh, to Benjamin Bat, over in the swamp, Benjamin only said, "Stuff and nonsense!"

Yet he looked most uncomfortable.

XVIII
THE TWO GRASSHOPPERS

Kiddie Katydid had a neighbor who was a good deal like him. Indeed, a careless person had to look sharply to discover much difference between them. But there was a difference. There was, especially, a certain way in which one could always tell them apart. One had only to take the trouble to look at their horns—or feelers. For Kiddie Katydid had horns as long—or longer—than he was. But his neighbor, who was known as Leaper the Locust, wore his horns quite short.

Although they saw each other often, Kiddie and this neighbor of his were not on the best of terms. The trouble was simply this: they couldn't agree on the question of

horns. Whenever they met they were sure to have a most unpleasant dispute before they parted.

Really, their quarrels were as bad as those that Jimmy Rabbit and Frisky Squirrel once had over the matter of tails. And many of the field folk said it was a shame that the Grasshoppers' trouble couldn't be settled somehow.

Strange as it may seem, that remark always made Leaper the Locust terribly angry. And it enraged Kiddie Katydid as did nothing else.

The difficulty was that the field people—as well as Farmer Green's whole family—had fallen into the lazy habit of calling those two by the same name. They spoke of Kiddie Katydid as "the Long-horned Grasshopper," while they termed his neighbor "the Short-horned Grasshopper."

"It's bad enough to look somewhat like Leaper the Locust, without being tagged with the name of Grasshopper, along with him," Kiddie Katydid spluttered.

"Honestly, I'm tempted to move away from this neighborhood," Leaper the Locust began to tell everyone he met. "If that chap would only trim his horns to the proper length I wouldn't mind it so much. But he's actually proud of

them. He's always waving them over his head, so people will notice them."

They both declared—Kiddie Katydid and Leaper the Locust—that they couldn't abide the name "Grasshopper." And they took pains to warn people in the neighborhood that they wouldn't answer to that name, no matter how loudly anyone might shout it at them.

After that a few of their neighbors took great delight in crying "Grasshopper! Grasshopper!" whenever one of the two happened to be within hearing. But no matter which of them it might be—whether Leaper the Locust or Kiddie Katydid—he pretended not to hear, and went right on eating.

But at last something happened that made both those jumpy gentlemen change their minds. From not wanting to be called Grasshoppers, they decided suddenly that they liked the name. And each claimed that the other had no right to it. This odd state of affairs arose when they learned that a stranger had come into the valley bearing a message marked "For Mr. Grasshopper."

"That's for me!" Kiddie Katydid cried, as soon as he heard the news.

"You're mistaken!" Leaper the Locust snapped. "The message is clearly intended for me. And I shan't let anybody else open it."

XIX
A QUARREL

Kiddie Katydid and Leaper the Locust quarreled so loudly that they soon drew a crowd around them.

"That message for 'Mr. Grasshopper' is certainly meant for me," Kiddie insisted. "You know yourself how you have objected to being called by the name of 'Grasshopper.' Why, only last night you refused to stop when Freddie Firefly shouted it after you."

"And you—" cried Leaper the Locust—"you paid no attention when Chirpy Cricket went up to you just as the moon rose this evening and said, 'How-dy do, Mr. Grasshopper!' right in your ear. You have no right to open the message. And I promise you that I shall make trouble for you if you don't mind your own affairs."

Kiddie Faced Leaper the Locust

"Well, well—what's all this row about, anyhow?" asked a strange voice. It was a newcomer in Pleasant Valley who had just spoken. He elbowed his way briskly through the throng until he reached the center of it, where Kiddie and Leaper the Locust faced each other angrily. People noticed that the stranger looked as if he had travelled a long distance. And he had a mail-pouch slung over his back. Furthermore, he was enough like Kiddie and Leaper to be a cousin of either one of them.

A person couldn't see his horns, on account of the hat that he wore.

When this traveller asked about the dispute, everybody hastened to explain the quarrel to him.

He listened carefully, and when he had heard the whole story he said:

"This message—do you know where it is? Do you know who has it now?"

"No!" Leaper the Locust cried, while Kiddie Katydid echoed the word.

"Ah! I thought not!" said the stranger, "I thought not, because I have it in this mail-bag. And now I must confess that I'm puzzled myself; for I don't know which one it's

intended for." And he pulled off his hat and began fanning himself with it.

It was perfectly plain to everyone that he was sadly perplexed.

Then Leaper the Locust gave a great shout.

"You're a Short-horn!" he exclaimed. "It can't be that you would have a message for a person with horns like his!" He pointed a scornful finger at poor Kiddie Katydid.

One glance at the stranger's head—now that he had removed his hat—told everybody that Leaper the Locust was not mistaken.

The stranger's horns were short. There was no denying that fact.

"I believe you must be the Mr. Grasshopper I'm looking for," said the stranger.

Then he put his hand inside his mail-pouch and pulled out a letter.

Leaper the Locust made a sudden jump for the message. But he was so eager that he sprang too far. He sailed far over the stranger's head and landed some distance away.

"Hullo! He doesn't want it!" said the stranger. "It must be for you!" And he

shoved the message into Kiddie Katydid's willing hands. Almost immediately Leaper the Locust jumped back again. But of course he was too late.

XX
THE STRANGER'S MESSAGE

Leaper the Locust was a rude fellow. He actually tried to snatch the message out of Kiddie Katydid's hands. But the stranger promptly bowled him over and told him sternly to be off.

Leaper did not dare disobey. So he hurried away. But after a few moments he came sailing back again and hung on the outskirts of the crowd, to see what was going on.

He soon discovered that there was some difficulty. Kiddie Katydid had torn open the message; and now he turned it over and over, wondering what it said—for to tell the truth, he couldn't read a single word.

"Ah!" the stranger remarked presently. "I see what your trouble is. You haven't your spectacles on!"

He was a polite person—that stranger. He knew better than to suggest that a body didn't know his letters!

"Let me help you!" he continued. And taking the message from Kiddie Katydid, he held it upside down and began reciting in a sing-song voice:

Dear Mr. Grasshopper, in Pleasant Valley——

Though you do not know me, I am a distant cousin of yours; and I am now on my way to your neighborhood, with my family. Not being acquainted in your part of the country, I am sending you this message with the hope that you will be ready to welcome us when we arrive. Please see that there's a plenty to eat!

"That's odd!" Kiddie Katydid exclaimed, after the stranger had finished. "Won't you please read that once more? I want to be sure that I understand it."

Thereupon the travel-worn messenger repeated the contents of the letter. And this time he held it with the back towards him, so that he couldn't see the writing at all. Like Kiddie Katydid, he didn't know how to read a word. But luckily he had learned the message by heart before starting on his journey.

"What's my cousin's name?" Kiddie Katydid asked him abruptly. "Hasn't he signed the message?"

"I'm afraid he forgot to do that," the stranger muttered. "No doubt he wants to surprise you," he added, as he handed the letter back to Kiddie.

"This cousin of mine—is he a Long-horn or a Short-horn?" Kiddie Katydid inquired.

At that question the stranger shifted uneasily from one foot to another. And since he had six feet, he looked for a moment as if he were engaged in a queer sort of dance.

"I should say—" he said at last—"I should say his horns were about medium."

Kiddie Katydid stared at the fellow very hard.

"I believe you know more than you're willing to tell!" he suddenly cried. And then he quickly shoved the letter inside the stranger's mail-pouch. "That's not for me, after all!" he declared. "Unless I'm greatly mistaken, the person that sent this letter is a Short-horn, the same as you.

And I want nothing to do with him!"

"Where's that other fellow that was clamoring for the message?" the stranger asked. And spying Leaper the Locust on the edge of the crowd, he sprang upon him, collared him, and explained that there had been a mistake.

"The message is for you," he announced.

"But I don't want it now!" Leaper the Locust shouted. "I've heard it twice already; and I don't like it in the least!"

XXI
LEAPER THE LOCUST IS WORRIED

Kiddie Katydid looked on happily while Leaper the Locust struggled to free himself from the clutches of the messenger. But Leaper was no match for the stranger. In the end he had to accept the message as his own.

"Now," said the stranger, "your cousin and his family will reach here by tomorrow at the latest. So you'd better be making arrangements to welcome him.

"Remember! Have plenty of food ready! I'll warn you now that if your cousin's family have to go hungry they'll be pretty angry with you."

"I don't believe I need to worry," Leaper the Locust remarked carelessly. "If they don't like what I have they can go without, for all I care."

Though the stranger said nothing in reply to that, he glared at Leaper in a threatening fashion which haunted him all the rest of the night.

"I wish I had never heard of this horrid message!" he exclaimed at last. "I wish I had never laid claim to it. It's going to cause me trouble, I know!"

The more he worried over the visit of his unknown cousin, the more Leaper the Locust wished he were safely rid of the whole affair.

"I know what I'll do!" he cried at last. "I'll disguise myself. I'll make my horns so long that people will think I'm somebody else."

So he set to work. And biting off some slender grasses, he bound them to his stubby horns with threads from a spider's web which he found in the pasture. Then he looked at himself in a pool.

"I'm a Long-horn now!" he exclaimed. And he was greatly pleased at the sight of himself—he who had once scoffed at Kiddie Katydid's horns and advised him to have them trimmed.

Meanwhile the strange messenger had disappeared. It was said that he had gone to meet the other travelers and guide them to their cousin, Leaper the Locust.

And there was great excitement throughout Pleasant Valley. A good many of the field people stopped at Farmer Green's dooryard and told Kiddie Katydid that they thought he had made a mistake.

"You might have had the honor of receiving the guests," they said.

"No, thank you!" he replied to all such remarks. "I'm willing enough to let Leaper the Locust do the honors. And unless I'm much mistaken, he's trembling in his shoes this very moment."

Then the field people would shake their heads and say that they didn't understand. Wasn't everybody glad to have company once in a while? And wouldn't it be a pleasure to talk with strangers who came from some far-off place, and ask them how the crops were where they lived, and what the weather was?

But Kiddie Katydid only said mysteriously, "Wait a bit! And if you want strangers to talk to, there'll soon be plenty of them in this neighborhood, if I'm not mistaken."

Well, Kiddie's neighbors couldn't imagine what he meant. They made a good many guesses. But there was always somebody to point out some flaw and upset every calculation. So at last everybody stopped guessing and admitted that he had no idea as to what Kiddie Katydid had in mind. It was just another one of his secrets. And people might as well wait patiently to see what happened. Even Solomon Owl agreed to that. "Time will tell!" he said with a wise nod of his head.

XXII
THE SHORT-HORNS ARRIVE

In at least one respect, the short-horned messenger had told the truth. Before twenty-four hours had gone by, the fellow returned to Farmer Green's dooryard; and with him came a great, fat person who belonged without question to the Locust family.

Nobody could call his horns long. Nor could anyone call them medium. They were short; and no one in his right mind would deny it.

"Where's that fellow you call Leaper?" the messenger asked Chirpy Cricket. "Here's his cousin! And the rest of the family will be dropping down here in just a few minutes."

Chirpy Cricket replied that he hadn't seen Leaper the Locust since the night before.

"That's strange!" the messenger remarked, turning to his fat companion. "He was to be here to welcome you."

"Ah! I see him now! He's right here in this tree!" exclaimed the fat one. And he half-jumped, half-flew into Kiddie Katydid's favorite tree.

"You're wrong!" said Kiddie Katydid. "I'm a Long-horn—and you can't claim to be a cousin of mine."

"My mistake! My mistake!" said the fat gentleman hastily. And he left even more suddenly than he had come.

"I hope your friend Leaper hasn't given us the slip," he remarked to the messenger as he joined him again.

"Never fear! If he fails us we'll find him and punish him as he deserves," said the messenger with a savage frown.

And Kiddie Katydid, looking down from his tree-top, was gladder than ever that he had escaped this terrible trouble that had come to Leaper the Locust.

Soon a patter, patter, patter made itself heard among the leaves.

"My goodness! Can that be rain?" Freddie Firefly exclaimed. "The moon is shining. And I don't see a cloud in the sky."

Even as he spoke the strange sound grew louder.

"Can it be hailing?" Freddie asked Kiddie Katydid anxiously.

"Oh, no!" Kiddie told him. "What you hear is nothing but Leaper the Locust's cousin's family. They're just beginning to arrive."

Freddie Firefly could scarcely believe his own ears.

"Why, there must be dozens of them!" he cried.

"More than that!" Kiddie Katydid replied.

"Hundreds, then!"

"Still more!" Kiddie Katydid said.

"Well, thousands, then!" cried Freddie Firefly. "You don't mean to say there are more of 'em than that?"

"There are tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands," Kiddie Katydid declared solemnly. "They'll eat everything they can find. And we shall be lucky if they leave enough for the rest of us to live on, after they pass on."

"How did you learn all this?" Freddie Firefly wanted to know.

"That's another of my secrets," said Kiddie Katydid.

So Freddie Firefly went off to hunt for Leaper the Locust. He knew now why Leaper had struggled to escape from that mysterious messenger with the curious message. And Freddie intended to ask Leaper a good many questions about his cousins.

But he couldn't find Leaper anywhere. He searched for him high and low, and far and wide. But nobody knew where Leaper was.

"There are lots of Short-horns everywhere tonight," Benjamin Bat told him. "I claim any one of them is just as good as another." And Benjamin grinned horribly.

Freddie Firefly shuddered. It seemed to him that he had never passed such a dreadful night before.

But Benjamin Bat was having the time of his life. He said that he hoped the Short-horns would like Pleasant Valley so well that they would decide to stay right there for the rest of their days. But, strange to say, Benjamin made things as unpleasant as possible for the newcomers. He ate as many of them as he could, remarking that from such a horde a few would scarcely be missed.

XXIII
THE BEST OF FRIENDS

In spite of his lengthened horns, Leaper the Locust hardly dared show himself while his cousins remained in the neighborhood.

But when he did venture out, not one of the hungry horde paid the slightest heed to him. They just ate and ate and ate. And Pleasant Valley soon began to take on a brown, withered look, as if fall had already come.

Kiddie Katydid soon saw that he would have to move, if Leaper's cousins lingered there much longer. And he didn't like the thought of quitting his home.

"I wouldn't mind going, if I could take Farmer Green's dooryard with me," he remarked to a long-horned gentleman who stopped to talk with him one evening. "But of course," Kiddie added with a smile, "that's out of the question."

"I quite agree with you," said the other. "In fact, I'm ready to agree to almost anything you say."

"These Short-horns are a terrible lot!" Kiddie Katydid observed.

"They are, indeed!" exclaimed the polite stranger. "I wish they'd finish their visit here and leave us in peace."

"I never want to see another Short-horn as long as I live," Kiddie Katydid declared.

"Nor I!" echoed the strange gentleman.

And Kiddie Katydid couldn't help thinking what a pleasant person the long-horned stranger was and how gentle were his manners.

"I'd like to know your name!" he cried. "It's a long time since I have met anybody so agreeable as you are."

The stranger drew nearer and lowered his voice.

"Don't you know me?" he asked.

Kiddie Katydid stared at him for a moment.

"No!" he said at length. "To be sure, you do have a familiar look, in a way. But I must say I don't recognize you."

Then the stranger spoke in a whisper:

"They used to call me 'Leaper the Locust'!"

"Go 'way!" cried Kiddie Katydid. "He was nothing but a Short-horned Grasshopper. And anyone can see with half an eye that your horns are fully as long as my own."

"They're not real horns," said the other sadly. "That is, they're real only a part of the way."

And looking more closely, Kiddie Katydid saw that what he said was true. It was, indeed, Leaper the Locust. And he was greatly changed in more ways than one.

He had lost his old, quarrelsome air; and he had become very meek and mild.

"Don't tell my cousins what I've done!" he begged Kiddie Katydid. "I don't want them to know who I am."

Kiddie assured the poor fellow that he would not betray him. He was sorry for Leaper the Locust.

"You'll be glad when your relations move on, won't you?" he said. "Then you can take those bits of grass off your horns and be yourself again."

Leaper's answer almost took Kiddie Katydid's breath away, for it was a most surprising statement.

"I'm never going to be a Short-horn again!" he declared. "I shall wear my horns long to the end of my days."

He kept his word, too. And so earnestly did he try to be like Kiddie Katydid in every way that he even attempted Kiddie's well known Katy did melody. But he never really succeeded at that. Anyone with an ear for music could tell the difference at once.

Luckily the grasshopper horde soon swept on to new fields. And a few warm rains, with sunshine sandwiched in between showers, soon turned the countryside green again. It was really Pleasant Valley once more. And on fine autumn nights Kiddie Katydid's shrill music could be heard more than ever near the farmhouse.

Leaper the Locust never could hear enough of it. He was always begging Kiddie to repeat the odd ditty about the mysterious Katy—hoping, perhaps, that sometime he might learn more about her.

But Kiddie Katydid guarded his secret too well.

THE END

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